

HENNEPIN HEALTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, the rising cost of health care is one of the most difficult policy decisions and budget challenges that we face as a Nation. The problem will continue to grow unless we act.

Rather than cutting care for the most vulnerable, however, we must develop smart ways to contain costs. A great example of this type of innovative approach is something that I'm proud to describe for you, and it is happening in my district. The program is called Hennepin Health program, and it is in Hennepin County, Minnesota. It is run by Hennepin County, and it integrates care for individuals with the highest need. Low-income, poor individuals needing health care can be very expensive to treat because they end up going to the emergency room, as they don't have a regular care provider, and yet the Hennepin Health adjusts to this situation and treats them on a cost-effective basis.

These individuals often face many challenges such as chemical dependency, chronic illnesses like diabetes and others, and unstable housing. Hennepin Health tries to identify the holistic needs of the individual, whether those needs happen to be medical care, housing, mental health treatment, or finding a job.

Here are a couple of individuals who this innovative program has already helped. A 50-year-old Native American man from my district is chronically homeless and suffers from hepatitis C. He used the emergency room as his primary medical care, but this was only because he didn't have transportation to a clinic. He was entitled to a free bus pass, but didn't have an address to receive it. Hennepin Health connected him with a social worker to pick up his bus tickets, and now he is able to see a clinic for his health care, keeping him out of the emergency room, which is, of course, the most expensive type of care and which you can't be rejected from for good reason, because it would be inhumane to do so.

The program has also helped an African American man in my district who has had a history of heart disease, kidney disease, and homelessness. Hennepin Health was able to connect him to housing providers, which helped him to stay out of the emergency room as well. He is now able to get all of his medical and mental health needs addressed at a health care home.

These are great success stories, people who are low income, who have serious health challenges, who don't have any health care, and so they seek the health care of last resort, the emergency room, which happens to be very expensive to treat them at. This is not the most effective way nor the most compassionate way to treat them. Ongoing regular treatment from a provider is what is needed. Hennepin

Health has saved money, and more importantly has helped people, members of our society, Americans, get their health care needs met.

As some cities have found, 1 percent of the individuals in a safety net program can often account for up to a third of the cost because of this problem of ending up at the emergency room. By coordinating care for high-need individuals, health care programs can greatly reduce costs while also providing better care.

While Hennepin Health program is new, it is extremely promising and has already demonstrated it can be a model for the Nation. I might add, Mr. Speaker, this is government, yes, government, delivering good service by being affordable, low cost, and smart. Chalk one up for the American taxpayer and people who are in chronic need of health care.

Mr. Speaker, Hennepin Health is a good idea. I'm proud of it.

□ 1030

SMART SECURITY: BETTER INVESTMENTS AND GREATER RETURNS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday Americans filed their tax returns, sending the Federal Treasury funds for the government to perform vital functions. Unfortunately, much of that money, way too much of that money, continues to be wasted on a policy that has failed miserably.

I'm talking about a policy that has lost the confidence of the American people whose taxes support it, a policy that has cost nearly 2,000 American lives, a policy that has done more to undermine our national security goals than is done to make our Nation safer. Of course, I'm talking about the war in Afghanistan.

This past weekend brought yet more evidence that our continued military presence in Afghanistan, carrying a price tag of roughly \$10 billion a month, is stirring up unrest and emboldening insurgents rather than providing security and stability. Beginning this last Sunday, the Taliban launched a series of bold, coordinated, and simultaneous attacks throughout Afghanistan, hitting the parliament building and diplomatic sites throughout the country.

Thankfully, there were limited casualties. By many accounts, the Afghan security forces handled themselves with skill in response to the violence, which is very good news, because as the Afghans are better able to police and protect themselves, that's all the more reason to hasten our military withdrawal from Afghanistan. Every day that we continue our military occupation, Mr. Speaker, is another day that we breed resentment, that we inflame

tensions and create more impassioned enemies.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are writing the check for this war. In fact, they just sent in their annual check this week. They deserve a better return on that investment. They deserve a set of policies that are more humane, more consistent with our best values as a Nation, and more likely to advance our national security objectives.

They deserve the kind of SMART Security approach I have been talking about for many years now. Instead of invasions and warfare, we need diplomacy, we need multilateral cooperation. Instead of military surges, we need civilian surges. Instead of troops with guns, we need to send humanitarian experts, experts that can help Afghanistan and other developing countries fight poverty, rebuild their infrastructure, educate their people and so much more.

Listen to this quote, Mr. Speaker:

In today's ever-complex world, we must use all the tools of national security to achieve our objectives, including a strong State Department and other civilian-led agencies. Development and diplomacy keep us safe by addressing threats in the most dangerous corners of the world and by preventing conflicts before they occur.

That's an excellent explanation of SMART Security, but that's not LYNN WOOLSEY, and it's not the Out of Afghanistan Caucus talking. It's from a letter to Congress signed by 80 retired military leaders making the case not to cut USAID and arguing for a strong, international affairs budget.

The time is now, not in 2014, Mr. Speaker. The time is now to bring our brave troops home to implement the compassionate and cost-effective SMART Security agenda that can keep our Nation safe, and it can keep peace in the world.

AMERICAN LEGISLATIVE EXCHANGE COUNCIL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I spoke about a secret organization called ALEC, also known as the American Legislative Exchange Council.

I talked yesterday about how ALEC promotes model legislation written by its corporate members and disseminated to conservative State lawmakers around the country. The public, whose votes elect these lawmakers to represent them, are kept in the dark about the fact that their Representative member is a member of ALEC. The legislative member goes on various retreats and junkets. The ALEC corporate members paid tens of thousands of dollars a year to be members, whereas the legislators pay \$50 a year.

You can see the imbalance there. This is something that is funded by the corporations' special interests. The